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S. John

11-21

16 Aug 1832

11-21-22 S. John

86

Benwent in a small boat to Kangaroo Point & then proceeded on foot to the ~~little settlement at Muddy Plains~~ through Clarence Plains paying visits to houses on the way & distributing tracts. The next day they walked on to Muddy Plains & reached the house of Robert Mather.

Part 2

The Bensons & Mathers

25/8/99

The Bensons.

In the extreme S. E. corner of Cumberland, a few miles from Beworth, & near the western slope of the bleak Mountains, locally known as 'The Fells', which divide Cumberland from Northumberland, lies the little village of Melmerby. Here in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> Cent<sup>y</sup> lived a family of small freeholders named Benson. They came of that ancient stock of hardy yeomen who dwell in what was once <sup>part of</sup> the Ancient British Kingdom of Strath-



Stubbs' Constitutional History of Eng.

6. 25 Jan'y. 1748  
The same year that Thos. Altcar  
migrated from Wylam to Leeds.

Fam. Mem<sup>s</sup> (23) Benson

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Clyde, and afterwards for centuries the troublous scene of Border Strife & foray. These Cumbrian 'statesmen' are a sturdy race, of a stubborn & independent spirit, farming with their own hands their little estates, often held in the same family for centuries. In wealth & comfort <sup>the yeoman was</sup> ~~they were~~ often fully the equal of the country squire, and (as a modern historian remarks) in antiquity of possession & purity of extraction was often the superior of the squire who looked down upon him as ignoble.

The Bensons were worthy members of their class. The first of the family of whom we have any account is Miles Benson, born 1673, who tilled a small farm which he had inherited near Thelmerby. This farm descended to his son John, and here in 1748 was born his son Joseph, youngest of a family of seven. When the boy was a year old John Benson sold the paternal estate for £600, to become



Green's Short Hist. of the English people  
Edn 1875 pp 716 et seqq.

at tenant farmer in a neighbouring locality and finally settled at Hetherscough. The moral & religious degradation of <sup>the</sup> social life, especially in the upper & lower classes, has been sketched in black & graphic outlines by Green in his 'Hist of the Eng. people'. Yet England's ~~heart~~ <sup>young and</sup> was still sound.

In the hearts of multitudes of the middle class the old Puritan feeling lived strong. The Benson household had indeed little learning. It is said that John Benson's ~~whole~~ library consisted of Keble's 'Whole duty of Man', a book of Sermons, and the Bible.

But he & his wife cherished the old fashioned piety of their forefathers, with its simple observances of church going, reading the Bible & daily prayer, and the quiet home in the Cumberland valley was an atmosphere well suited for <sup>the development of</sup> the gentle and serious youngest son. His studious inclination and his religious feeling pointed him out for the Church, and his father placed him under the



tuition of a <sup>neighbouring</sup> Presbyterian Minister, and Joseph set himself greedily to the study of theology and the classics. There has been preserved for us a glimpse of the primitive home life of the young student. Behave a picture of the ~~old~~ <sup>big</sup> farm hall or kitchen, <sup>on a bright winter evening</sup> in which the mistress and her maids sit spinning, the servants amusing themselves round the great wood fire at one end of the big hall, while at the other end, ~~in~~ far away in the biting cold, sits the boy student absorbed in his books, ~~disregarding~~ his mother's entreaties to take more thought of his comfort. The boy was no weakling; he had the North Country hardiness, and delighted in accompanying his father's shepherds over the bleak fells in the hard winters, probing the snow <sup>drifts</sup> with long poles to rescue the buried sheep. To this training it is probable Joseph Benson owed the power of endurance which he showed in after life & the vigorous health which in spite of arduous



mental labour he preserved nearly to the end of his days. When he left school at 16 he took a post as teacher in a school at Gamblesby, and here came to him the crisis that was to determine the future course of his life. When Joseph Benson was born ~~all~~ England was quivering under the preaching of Whitfield & Wesley, but it was long before the wave of ~~strong~~ religious emotion reached those far away Cumberland valleys.

When Joseph was in his 18<sup>th</sup> year he came under the influence of his cousin Joshua Watson, who had been converted by the Methodist preachers, and induced the young man to cast in his lot with the new Society. His life, blameless as it had been, now appeared to him <sup>little</sup> better than ~~heathenism~~ <sup>heathenism & spirit</sup> & a long period of mental anguish & struggle ensued before he could say that he had 'found peace'. Hearing of a vacancy for a classical master at Wesley's school at Kingswood,



Oct 18.

March 1766

16 Jan. Mewls (27) John Benson 91

he set off in the depth of winter to walk across the snow clad fells on his road to Newcastle where the great preacher then was. His father accompanied him for some miles, and the two parted from each other with floods of tears, to meet (as it proved) no more in this world. After weary wanderings on foot over England he at last found Kesley and was rewarded for his perseverance by being appointed classical master at King's wood. But his heart was set on entering the ministry of the Church of England, and with this object in view he studied hard in Theology, Philosophy, and Science, and at 21 entered his name at the University of Oxford to qualify for orders. Here to his bitter disappointment he found no disposition to encourage learning, the instruction being so elementary that it was useless to him. Though of considerable classical attainments & of blameless conduct he ~~had~~ incurred the displeasure of the



Oct. 23.

18 Jan. 1771 (28) Mr Benson 92

University authorities in consequence of his connection with Wesley as a preacher <sup>approach</sup> & he was when the time to graduate <sup>came</sup> the Vice Principal refused on that account to sign his testimonials for orders & Benson left without taking his degree. ~~Nothing~~ <sup>Nothing</sup> daunted still cherishing his desire to become a clergyman he qualified for orders, but the Bishop refused to ordain him on the pretext of his want of a degree, the real reason being his connection with the Methodists.

Thus foiled in his hopes he was reluctantly compelled to turn to Wesley's Society and in 1771 was appointed as a regular preacher one of Mr Wesley's regular itinerant preachers. He rapidly grew in threw himself into his work with all the energy of his nature, and rapidly grew in influence. His labour was unceasing & as his talents became known this reputation as a preacher of exceptional power increased, he was appointed <sup>successor</sup> to the charge of the most important towns in the Kingdom,



especially to the large centres of manufacturing industry in the north and in the midlands. He soon came to be recognised as one of the leading men of the Society. His zeal to ~~win~~ <sup>redeem</sup> souls was indefatigable; his labours were unceasing. When he preached multitudes flocked to hear him. The word of the Lord burned in his mouth like a fire. It was his habit to preach 4 times on a Sunday, beginning at 6 in the morning & on every week day he preached once or twice, constantly walking the long distances between the preaching stations. He became one of the most popular preachers in England, though on reading his printed sermons it is difficult to see where his power lay. It must have been a special personal note which gave to his passionate exhortations their moving effect on large congregations, & which led Rev R<sup>d</sup> Cecil to style him 'Demosthenic', and Robt Hall to declare that he was 'absolutely



irresistible." Wesley fully appreciated his ability & till his death cherished him as a valued & trusted friend and co-worker. At Wesley's death Benson, if not the most brilliant, was without doubt the most trusted man in the Society. He had a fine tact, a calm judgment & a wise moderation which were of infinite service to the Connection in the heated contentions which followed the death of the autocratic founder, and more than once by his influence & counsels he was able to avert the imminent danger which threatened the Society of being rent in twain. <sup>in reading the story of</sup> His progress through Cornwall on one of his missions of Pacification strikes one with astonishment at the amazement at the power with which ~~this retiring~~ one is struck with amazement at the power of which this man, ~~naturally~~ one is struck with amazement at the power with which this man, by nature & taste a retiring student, could sway <sup>the</sup> huge crowds -



Adam Clarke &c.

20 Jan. Thurs (31) Benson

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numbering from 5000 to 20,000. of rough miners who eagerly thronged to hear him.

Not only as a popular preacher and as a wise & trusted father in the Church did Benson win the affectionate regard of the Society. Comparatively few preachers in the Connection were scholars or theologians. Benson was both, and though there were others who had more brilliant gifts, it was to him that the Society looked as the controversialist who by his pen was best fitted to defend the principles & practices of Methodism as a pure form of Orthodox Christianity.

All these qualifications combined to force him into a prominence from which he shrank. His passion for retirement & meditation & his aversion to bustle continued strong to the last. He avoided the meetings of Conference whenever it was possible, and it was with much reluctance that he accepted the office of President of Conference, which



July 1800

that Campo Santo of  
Methodism.

1809

It is not to be wondered at that such close application should have told on him & that he should have had fainting fits. Yet such was his vigour that when over 70 he would preach twice on a Sunday & walk 10 to 15 miles in the day. His last sermon was preached in Nov 1821 & from that time he rapidly failed & died at City Road 15 Feb 1821.

he was twice elected.

At the age of 53 he was appointed Superintendent of the London Circuit & two or three years later Editor of the Methodist Magazine. Though here his wanderings as an itinerant minister came to an end, & he had his <sup>permanent</sup> home in "Mr Wesley's House" hard by the City Road Chapel, he did not cease to preach but found ample field for ministerial & pastoral work in the Metropolis & frequently in the provinces also. But his principal work was ~~later~~ now with his pen. Besides editing the Magazine he wrote the life of his friend Fletcher of Madelley & also prepared a new edition of Wesley's works. At the age of 62 ~~at~~ the express request of Conference he undertook his most extensive work, his well known 'Commentary on the Bible'. To this work he gave 9 years continuous labour, frequently working in his study from 4 or 5 in the morning to 11 at night. ~~During~~



216 It was proposed that he should be buried  
in the same grave with Wesley, but his family  
preferred that he should lie in his own family  
vault. And so he lies in the little burial ground  
of the City Road Chapel, that 'Campo Santo' of  
Methodism. ~~at~~ <sup>with</sup> the early worthies of the Socy  
around him, & with a memorial tablet within  
the Communion rails of the Chapel itself -  
May 1780. at the Parish Church, Leeds.

Note - Monument to Capt<sup>n</sup> Samuel  
Walker, (Killed at Talavera) in  
the Leeds Parish Church -

b. 1786. Bapt. by Wesley. d. 1831.

\* Joseph \* Surgeon London. b. 1780 d. 1853.

bapt. by Wesley  
John b. 1783 d. 1860, Rector of Norton -  
Sub. Hamdon, Somerset

Sam. Mearns (33) Benson 97  
Until her marriage his daughter Anne  
(my grandmother) acted as his  
amanuensis.

Nothing has yet been said about  
Benson's Domestic life. At the age of  
33 he married Sarah Thompson,  
daughter of Thos Thompson a well to do  
Comfactor near of Knottmeyer, Yorks.  
His wife was a woman of piety and  
intelligence and they lived happily  
together for 30 years. Of their family  
of 9, three sons & three daughters grew  
up and survived both parents.

Until the <sup>two</sup> eldest boys went to Cambridge,  
Anne the eldest of the daughters shared  
in the education of her brothers  
and obtained an acquaintance with  
both Latin & Greek. Until her  
marriage with my grandfather, 1811,  
she acted as her father's amanuensis  
& assistant in his literary work.

\* The eldest son Joseph entered the  
medical profession; the second son  
John took orders & became Rector of  
Norton-Sub. Hamdon, Somerset.



b. 1799 d. 1881.

I remember him there in 1854

b. 1786. Bapt by Wesley. died 1831.

b. 1788 d. 1825.

b. 1795 d. 1882.

Fam. Mem<sup>rs</sup>. (34) Benson 98

The youngest son Samuel also took orders & was for many years curate at the Church of St Saviour's Southwark.

Joseph & John are represented by numerous descendants. Samuel ~~though~~ married but left no issue.

Of the daughters, Ann the eldest married my grandfather - Isabella married Phytall a Cabinet maker, whom I met when in London in 1856. He then had a shop in Islington & struck me as narrow & bigoted & by no means attractive. They had 5 children <sup>4 died in infancy</sup> & the daughter survived until 1878 when she died unmarried.

Sarah the youngest married Jas Hamond who was not a success in life. She left a son & daughter - Quaint, nervous, timid, old maid & bachelor.

The descendants of Joseph Benson are therefore at the present day represented by the descendants of his son Joseph (the London Surgeon) who belong to various professions, & are for the most part to be found in or about the metropolis



Fam. Memoirs. (35) Benson 99

2) The Sons of John (the Somersetshire Rector) ~~who~~ are to be found near the old Somersetshire home, <sup>also at Hertford &</sup> at in Shropshire - Allied by near on the mother's side to the Gilpins (descendants of Bernard Gilpin the apostle of the North) they cling to a very narrow school of Calvinistic faith - though their <sup>daughters</sup> children have of Mr Benson of Hertford have burst the traditional trammels, one having qualified as a Doctor, and another showing some ability as an Artist.

3) Of my grandmothers family children the youngest Son Samuel was the last survivor, dying in 1898(?) of grand children some 25 survive, of great grandchildren <sup>there are</sup> more than 30.

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Fam. Memo. (36) Mather 100

The Mather Family 25/8/99

In the days when George II was King, when the Rebellion of '45 was making the last effort in the Jacobite Cause, when my grandfather's family ~~were settled~~ had removed from the old ancestral home at Wylam, & were settled at Newcastle, in the ~~year~~ <sup>next</sup> that the Rev<sup>d</sup> Thos Walker migrated from Wylam to Leeds, and the Rev<sup>d</sup> Jos Benson was born in the quiet Cumberland <sup>ancestral</sup> farmhouse at Melmerby, there dwelt in Aberdeenshire or somewhere thereabouts in the East of Scotland a family bearing the name of Mather. Living somewhere on the borders of the Highlands the Mathers were lowland Scotch & either small farmers or mechanics. One of the sons, Andrew, having married a

Chose the trade of a blacksmith &



[ Ann Hamilton - Sarah Benson Walker in a letter to her brother Joseph dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 1882 wrote "my grandfather, Andrew Mather, was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of 1754 and died at Leitholm near Coldstream on the 11<sup>th</sup> of the 6<sup>th</sup> mo 1826. My grandmother Agnes Hamilton was born in the 8 March 1752, was married in 1778 and died about 1829 or 30. "

At Lauder 1 May 1780

Fam. News (37) Mather 107

Lassie named Ann Hamilton, migrated from the old home to seek more profitable work in the South. He settled down in the Royal Burgh of Lauder not far from the ancient town of Berwick on Tweed. Here and at a village 7 miles from Kelso, to which he after removed, sons were born to him Robert (my grandfather) Andrew & Adam, and daughters Mary & Elspeth. Elspeth married a small farmer named Arneil & left a family one of whom was in 1854 living with her Aunt Mary in Hoxton London. Mary never married. I remember her well in 1854 a tall bony sandy-haired Scotchwoman - and died in 186 in London at a good old age the last of her family. Robert (my grandfather) was not content with his prospects on the Scottish border, and like



So many other Scotchmen turned his footsteps towards the more promising fields lying open to be exploited amongst the Southrons. At the age of 14½ (say 1795) he went up to London to seek his fortune. Probably, like many poor Scotch boys of that time, he made the journey on foot with occasional casts in a wagon or other casual conveyance. In London he apprenticed himself to a fellow countryman named Romanes, a hosier & freeman of the City. When after 7 years his term of apprenticeship was out, he had so gained his employer's <sup>great</sup> confidence that his Master confided the business to his care. Young Mathew then became himself a freeman of the City & a member of the Beavers Co, & set up in business for himself, finally removing to a larger shop at 21 Smith,



Sam. Newb. (39) Mathew

Bishopsgate St. The <sup>new</sup> Mercer's business was an important & fairly profitable one in the days when the ordinary dress was grey stockings or grey woollen pantaloons with knee breeches, and drab gaiters for cold & wet weather, and the young Scotchman prospered. He kept up the old habits of pious observance & regularly attended the Presbyterian worship, until a relation coming up to London who had become a convert to the Methodists who were gathering in their thousands with all the ardour of a new faith, young Mathew was induced to go to hear the preachers, and before long became an ardent member of W. Wesley's connection, in which he found a congenial atmosphere for his emotional temperament. He attended the Class meetings and soon work was found for him in the Sunday School, where



\* Her father was a hard and Scotchman,  
short, thick set, florid, & yellow  
hair, & sturdy & practical  
every day, with but few additans  
of education & found a congenial  
work and an outlet for the  
Methodist zeal which

Fam. Memb (40) Mathew

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he became Superintendent. It chanced  
that at this school Ann Benson,  
eldest daughter of the Rev J. Benson,  
was also a teacher. She was a  
slight delicate & refined girl, with  
an education far beyond what was  
usual for girls in those days, includ-  
ing Latin & Greek and even some  
acquaintance with philosophers like  
Locke & theologians like Butler.  
Of a meditative & thoughtful spirit,  
She had much of her father's zeal  
for religious work, & a special  
delight in teaching the young &  
ignorant. The pious & cultivated  
minister's daughter was just the  
woman. The young superintendent  
was of a strongly contrasted type.  
It might be supposed that there would  
be little in common between the young  
Superintendent & the cultivated  
minister's daughter. He was of the  
hard and Scotch type, short & thick set



With florid complexion & yellow hair.  
 Sturdy, practical & energetic, with  
~~small advantages of education and~~  
 a bluff hearty manner, and possessing  
 small advantages of education or  
 social surroundings, there could  
 hardly be a stronger contrast than  
 the Superintendent and the  
 sensitive & cultivated Minister's  
 daughter. It was another instance  
 of "not like to like, but like in difference."  
 Here was a new type of womanhood.  
 Her delicacy & gentle refinement  
 irresistibly attracted him, and he  
 soon found that his devotion was  
 not unpleasing. It is not to be wondered  
 at that Ann's family should have  
 looked upon this attachment with  
 strong disapproval. But Ann had  
 her full share of the quiet tenacity  
 of her family, she had given her heart  
 to the young Scotch tradesman, and  
 after some qualms as to her duty, her  
 steady persistency overcame the old  
 scholar's opposition. He gave a



Manifestly reluctant consent - Lou 16<sup>th</sup>  
Oct 1871 the two were married at St  
Luke's Church, Old St, London.  
Robert Matthew was then 33, & his wife  
7 years younger. On 14<sup>th</sup> Sept 1872  
my mother, Sarah Benson Matthew,  
was born at the house in Sun Street.  
Two sons followed, Joseph May 1874  
& Robert Andrew 17 Aug 1875, just  
two months after Waterloo.

At the baptism of this child was  
the occasion of a remarkable incident.  
As the result of a severe illness Ann  
Matthew had for 12 mos ~~been~~ lost both  
power & feeling in her feet. Her father  
came to the baptism with the firm  
faith that God would restore her.  
After the baptism her father prayed  
fervently, especially pleading the  
promise of Christ that where 2 or 3  
met to ask anything it should be  
granted. Immediately the prayer had  
concluded Ann handed the child to  
the nurse, rose from her seat & walked  
across the room. The lameness never



Samuel's (W.D.) Matthew

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returned. No miracle was ever better attested. The lameness was notorious the cure instant & complete. We have the independent accounts of four competent witnesses, her father, her brother, her husband & another. There can be no possible doubt of either the lameness or the instant recovery. The explanations will be various according to the views of the reader.

Though cured of her lameness Anna Matthew remained more or less of an invalid, and found the management of her household beyond her strength. Her husband's sister Mary kept house for her, but she found the little self-willed eldest girl difficult to manage. They mother used to find in Mr Wesley's House, where her grandfather lived, a haven of refuge, and to the end of her days retained a vivid remembrance of those quiet & happy days, & the venerable figure of the small slight old scholar, thin faced, with large features & pale complexion, and of his old



fashioned black knee breeches & shoes with large buckles. In 1821 Joseph Benson died. At this time there was much talk about the new colony in the South Seas, & many were setting out to try their fortunes in H<sup>D</sup> land. Bentworth & Leffrey's a/c's had just been published & gave glowing descriptions of the climate & resources of the new colony & the opening it presented for settlers. Robert Mather read the books & the idea of emigration began to take shape in his mind. In H<sup>D</sup> he might find a favourable opening as a settler & in such a climate he might hope to see his wife's health restored. His friends scouted the idea of such a banishment, but conversations with Bentworth himself strengthened the idea. An additional incentive was the letters of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Horton, the Wesleyan missionary at Hobart Town, who strongly urged the emigration of Methodists, with



a view to the influence they would exert in bringing about a better social & religious tone in the Colony. His wife had now by the death of her father lost the strongest tie to England, & finding her husband's mind set on emigration, she ~~was~~ resolved no longer to oppose him, and threw herself for the parting from home associations & for facing the unknown privations of foreign exile.

The Mearns now began to make their preparations. Brother Adam took over the business, fittings & furniture for a house in the bush were procured, & all available cash was turned into goods for the colonial market. In Oct 1821 the family went on board the barque 'Hope' at Blackwall. It was ten days before they got to sea & then a violent storm overtook them in the Downs & narrowly escaping shipwreck, the ship ~~was~~ disabled 'Hope' ran into Ramsgate. Here it was found that the ship was unquestionably seaworthy,



Fam. Memls (46) Matthew

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insufficiently formed & carrying too many passengers. She was detained by the authorities, & after for 6 mos the unfortunate passengers were kept waiting for another vessel, which through the influence of some members of the House of Commons was eventually supplied for them by the Government, the barque 'Heroine' Capt<sup>n</sup> Osler. But here instead of the comforts of the Cabin, they had to be content with the accommodation of the 'tween decks & the fare of the ordinary emigrant supplemented by the supplies they provided for themselves.

The voyage was tedious & uncomfortable. At Rio where they touched the Capt<sup>n</sup> involved in some smuggling business, put to sea suddenly, leaving Mr Matthew & other passengers behind, & was brought back by an English man of war cutter. The passengers were numerous & included some whose names were afterwards well known in the Colony Hopkins, Dunn, Geo Carr Clark, Lieut Steele, John Walker, Warburton, Rev Geo Clarke (for N.Z.) & others of less note. At last after a voyage of



It is still standing.

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Jann. Thewls. (47) Maithen  
of 20 weeks the 'Heroine' cast anchor in  
the Derwent. Houses in Hobart were  
scarce & dear, but my grandfather  
secured a small two story house in  
Brisbane Street, then known as Potter's  
Hill, at that time on the edge of the  
bush surrounding the town. Here  
he began business. Hobart was a poor  
little unformed town of mean one  
story wooden cottages, the streets  
unmade with stumps, <sup>seven trees</sup> still standing  
in many of them, but from the  
influx of emigrants with capital,  
the Gov<sup>t</sup> expenditure, & the plentiful  
supply of cheap labour under the  
assignment system, the Colony was  
rapidly developing & was exciting  
the strong jealousy of Sydney which  
it seemed badefair to rival if not  
surpass.

The new settler however was not  
content with his narrow quarters on  
Potter's Hill. He bought a corner lot  
from Connolly & Co of L<sup>d</sup>pool & Eliz<sup>th</sup> Sts



Fam. Mem's (48) Mather

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& thereon arose a shop with large windows  
& a style about it that made 'London  
House' the admiration of Hobart Town.  
The business was of the usual sort  
every description of article being  
included in the stock in trade. The  
profits were large & my grandfather  
prospered. But his wife's health  
was not restored, & moved chiefly by  
this consideration for her & also by  
his yet unfulfilled desire to determination  
with which he had left England, viz<sup>t</sup>  
to become a settler on the land, in  
an evil day he took up a grant at  
Muddy Plains & began to sink his  
money in farming. Those were the  
days of free grants & Mather in virtue  
of the capital he could shew had no  
difficulty in obtaining 1500 ac eventually  
increased to 2500 ac. He cd have got  
better land up country, but chose the  
sea side for the sake of his wife's  
health. As soon as a small house  
could be put up my grandmother  
went down, her husband remaining

1824/5



27 Aug. 1831.

Fam. Mem. (49) Mathew

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in town to superintend the business & going down ~~from~~ Sat to Monday. The business prospered, but the profits went into the farm, with free land, cheap labour & good markets the farm should have prospered also.

But given such an ignorance of farming as leaves a proprietor dependent on overseers and leads him to enter upon large expenditure on unremunerative improvements. This was the case with my grandfather. His overseer, a Scotchman named Arnstead, induced him to undertake large drainage schemes which were a failure partly from bad engineering & partly because of the poorness of the soil. Nor were things improved when he left his son Joseph to manage the business & took charge of the farm himself. After 7 years residence at the farm his wife, whose health had been gradually failing more & more, died very suddenly. This was a great blow to him, & after her death affairs



Jam. Mearls (50) Mather

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grew gradually worse, ~~the farm until in~~  
~~1835 the farm~~ and until matters were  
brought to a crisis a heavy loss caused  
by the dishonesty of a man with whom  
he had dealings & the business had to  
be wound up. My grandfather  
struggled on at the farm for a little  
longer, but in 1835 that was sold  
for a fraction of what it had cost,  
and life had to be begun again.

Through the kindness of a number  
of friends my grandfather was  
assisted to set up in business again  
in the premises in L'pool Street,  
~~now~~ where it is still carried on by  
~~his~~ his grandson Frank under the  
name of J B Mather & Son. Here he  
again began to prosper, & as soon  
as he was in a position to do so  
repaid to his friends the money  
which they had advanced.

It was while the Mathers were  
at Landerdale that they became  
acquainted with J<sup>r</sup> Backhouse  
& G<sup>r</sup> Walker, and as a result



see pp 24 + 25

Fam. Memoirs (57) Matthew 115

Most of the family were led to give up their connection with the Wesleyans & join the Society of Friends. Robert Andrew was the first convert, then Mr Matthew & his daughter Slater Joseph. Before they left Landerdale the daughter became engaged to the Quaker Missionary.

In 1840 or 1841 my grandfather married again. His second wife was a Yorkshire woman from the Cleveland district - village of Skelton, & aftas of Whitby. Her brother was a ship Captain, one of the early traders to Hobart, who wrote one of the first books on the Colony. He took up land at Skelton on the Isis, Macquarie River, & was well known through the island, being a bluff, kind hearted & eccentric character sailor. The marriage was a most fortunate one. Mr Matthew was an excellent manager, but of placid temper,



and most lovable character & disposition. She was a most careful & affectionate wife, <sup>was</sup> beloved by her step-grandchildren to whom she showed the most unwearying kindness. In fact she was an ideal grandmother, and no greater treat could be devised for us in our childhood than a day at the 'Cottage' in Upper Liverpool Street, where we found a perfect Paradise of delights. She survived her husband & her brother, living until 1872, attended by the loving care of her husband's numerous grandchildren, & dying in a good old age, having endeared herself not only to them but to many others in no way kin to her, by her benefits & her goodness of heart, ~~though~~ which never failed even under the pressure of a religious melancholy which clouded her mind in the last years of her life.



See date.

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Fam. Memls (53) Mather  
There is no one of the family  
who lives in the "grandchildren's"  
more affectionate memory than  
good "Grandmother Mather" -  
the only grandmother that most  
of us ever knew, and who filled  
the ideal perfectly.

My grandfather died after a  
painful illness in 1855 or 1856  
at the age of 75; universally  
respected for his uprightness in  
business. ~~He still~~ retained to his  
though a staunch & 'consistent'  
friend he ~~still~~ retained to the  
last much of the fervent Methodist  
ways. The chief Methodist  
characteristic that I remember  
about him, was his habit of  
singing hymns to himself.

His eldest son Joseph Benson  
succeeded him in the business  
wh he carried on for over 30 years  
after his father's death. He married



17 May 1890

Fam. Memoirs (54) Matthew

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Anna Maria daughter of Jas. Cotton of Kelvedon, Great Swanport, & had one son & 3 daughters who grew up to maturity & who still survive.

Joseph Benson Matthew partook largely of the Benson character & I think also of the Benson physique. He was never robust, suffering esp. in his younger days from long & tedious illnesses, so that he was always looked upon as <sup>not</sup> likely to be long lived. But he must have had the Benson toughness of constitution, for in his later years his health improved & though <sup>he was</sup> subject to headaches, and lived to attain the age of 76. He had a certain caniness & closeness which did not come from the Bensons but was doubtless due to his Scotch blood, but in business his name was a synonym for fair & upright dealing in every respect. He had



Jam. Mewes (55) Mather

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a shrewd humour, which showed itself in a dry wit too kindly & restrained to be called caustic, but which was at times ~~and~~ disconcerting to the pretentious or impertinent. In his later years he largely left the management of the business to his son, & devoted much of his time to philanthropic religious work. His religious work was mostly in connection with his own religious Society, though he was for long the Secretary & most active member of the Bible Society. But his chief concern in his later days was in the Juvenile Reformatory, in which he took a ~~was~~ constant unwearying interest, devoting a large amount of time & trouble to the oversight of the establishment at the Cascades, and care for the comfort



Fam. Mem<sup>o</sup>. (56) Matth

and winning their affectionate regard  
& respect.

(See Obituary sketch by JBH in  
Hobart Mercury - 19 May 1890)

JBH's only son Joseph Francis  
is a worthy successor of a worthy  
father. For a number of years prior  
to his father's death he had the  
chief care of the business. He succeeded  
to it, and has fully upheld its  
high reputation. One of the most  
noticeable features of his business life,  
is his care for his work people of  
whom he employs a number, principally  
women & girls. In spite of the severe  
competition of prices he steadily  
refuses to ~~make~~ increase his profits  
by paying low wages, insisting that  
a fair living wage is due to his  
employees, from whom he expects  
first class work in return. For the  
comfort of the girls he has provided  
a pleasant airy room in which they  
can eat their mid-day meal, supplying



Fam. Mem<sup>rs</sup> (54) Mattheu

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various a good selection of magazines & other reading for their amusement & improvement during the spare time of the dinner hour. His consideration & thoughtfulness for their welfare are not unappreciated. His workpeople are devoted to him, and dread his mild remonstrance or rebuke far more than the severe scoldings & penalties with which other masters enforce discipline & good work, while they look upon the possibility of dismissal as one of the greatest of calamities. He has therefore little or no trouble with his employes who give a willing service, and remain long years in his employ. One old man in particular has been with the firm over 40 years.

~~Frank~~ Amongst business men there is no one more respected & trusted. Men look upon him as incapable of doing an unjust or mean action, or swerving a hair's breadth from the truth.



Fam. Memls (58) Mather

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Frank is retiring in his habits,  
& somewhat slow & hesitating in  
his speech, averse to any public  
appearance, yet he does an astonishing  
amount of useful & laborious work,  
notwithstanding that his business  
(especially in these difficult times)  
would be quite enough for the energies  
of most men. He takes an active  
part in the affairs of his own religious  
Society; is the life & soul of the  
Management of the Friends High  
School (160 scholars) which owes  
much of its success to his organising  
faculty, his careful attention to  
detail, & his wisdom & tact;  
and is also Secretary to the Bible  
Society which absorbs a large amount  
of time. In addition to all this he  
finds time to write <sup>thoughtful</sup> papers for the  
"Australian Friend", of which he has for  
some time had the editorial chair,  
is a member of the Central Board of  
Advice for Hobart State Schools, and



takes an interested part in Tourist  
Ass. & Local Improvement Associations,  
Chamber of Commerce, Mercantile  
Associations &c. In none of these is his  
part a perfunctory one. Everything  
he undertakes receives his best  
thought and is done thoroughly.  
At meetings, Committee & others, he  
makes no speeches, but thinking out  
the matter beforehand will often  
present himself with a short  
paper, containing a well considered  
scheme or pregnant suggestions,  
which are always listened to with  
(and deserve) attention & respect.

Those who know <sup>him</sup> wonder how it is  
that with the constant & careful  
attention which he gives to the  
minute details of his business,  
he can find time to do & write so  
much. The secret lies in his  
methodical habits & his close  
economy of every minute of time,



Jam. Menel (60) Mather

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and his single-eyed aim to do good  
useful work without any thought  
of personal consideration <sup>or distinction</sup>. Entirely  
free from vanity or egotism, he is  
satisfied to remain in the background  
so long as the work which he thinks  
desirable is done. Though not  
robust, it is evident that he has  
no small share of the toughness &  
quiet tenacity which is the special  
characteristics of the Benson blood;  
and much also of their ascetic  
temperament, for he ~~takes~~ has no  
recreations - being with difficulty  
persuaded to take at long intervals  
a few days quiet holiday in the  
country for his health's sake, when  
run down. ~~His~~ recreation of doing  
good seems to supply all that  
he requires.

~~But~~ to  
Many years since he married  
Margaret Lidbetter, daughter of



Thos. Hibbetter, a sea Captain & a friend. ~~He & she~~ She was a girl of considerable attractions, warm hearted, lovable & charming - intelligent & well educated. He & his wife Maggie were deeply attached to each other, but their happy married life was short & Maggie died in the year of her marriage. The blow to Frank was a severe one, more severe as she left no children behind her. He has not married again.

His second daughter, Esther, married Chas. H. Robey, a young Stationer who came out from England for his health - an amiable & upright man. They have two girls, and the marriage has had but one drawback the state of the husband's health, which has now for some month's laid him aside from work.



Emma the youngest girl, married Mr Benson, a young friend of Louisa <sup>mean</sup> who like Ch Robey came to Australia for the cure of similar lung trouble, ~~and~~ but with better results. They have three children, & ~~live~~ have for some time lived in Melbourne.

Anna the eldest is unmarried & cares for the household which is located in a comfortable old house in Colville St Hobart, surrounded by a fine garden which was the delight of EBM in his old days. They have given to their house the name of the old family home - Melmerby - and in it live Frank, Anna, & the Robey family.

Robert Andrew Mather. Second son of Robert & Ann Mather, born 1815. "Uncle Robert" was a great favourite with us all. He was short, rather stout, (or rather thick set) fair complexion,



Jam. Mewls (63) Mather

& somewhat <sup>strongly</sup> marked features. He was of sanguine temperament, downright, outspoken & positive, somewhat masterful but warm hearted and impulsive; of a more buoyant & open disposition than his elder brother, and therefore.

More attractive to his youngsters. He had a great appreciation of humor, and his laugh was good to hear.

Physically he was more of the Mather than the Benson, and from the Scotch ancestry he may have got his strong will & decisive tones, but he doubtless owed much of his immovableness & his pertinacious adherence to his own way to his Benson blood. Though the first of

his family to join Friends - and this impulsiveness was characteristic of the man, he retained much of the emotional Methodism, and in later life associated himself closely with Plymouth Brethren & other extreme sectaries in evangelistic



The Counsellor

Sam. Mearns (64) Mather

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work among the poor at the 'Peoples Hall' in Bathurst St. Selsewhere. He always seemed to me to be more Wesleyan than friend in his sympathies & perhaps even in his creed.

In his earlier life he was absorbed chiefly in business, but at a later period his business took quite a secondary place, and his benevolence became an absorbing passion. At the Hospital, at the Benevolent Socy & elsewhere he was indefatigable in relieving distress & comforting & helping those who had no helper. His zeal was impulsive, his labour unceasing, and the poor & needy instinctively turned to Robert Andrew Mather for help & sympathy. To his warm heart the need always appealed, though the merit might be conspicuously wanting. He was therefore, in spite of a remarkably strong common sense, often the prey of the designing loafer,



and his recommendation of a case was not invariably taken as a safe credential of deserving merit. But men loved him all the more for this weakness - or charity. In his later days, until his bodily & mental powers began to fail the greater portion of his time & energies was given to the care of the bodies & souls of the poor & neglected, & even the vicious.

In early life he was full of energy in business, & indefatigable in work. In youth he showed considerable mechanical skill & for a time carried on business as a wheelwright with success, but left it to learn the linen drapery business in Sydney. He then became an assistant in G. H. H.'s shop, and, on my father giving up the linen drapery in 1848, Uncle Robert started on his own account in that line, taking the shop in Brock's Buildings where the



Jam. Menzies (66) Matthew

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business, one of the best in Hobart, has been carried on down to the present day. For honest quality of goods & straight forward dealing the firm still hold the record, and through many vicissitudes of fortune & even when in sorely embarrassed circumstances their creditors have always placed a remarkable trust in their integrity, which has tilted them over very severe crises.

Uncle Robert's wife was a daughter of Theophilus Pollard. When she was quite a child her mother died, & family circumstances not being happy she came to live with the Cottons at Kelvedon. Here Robert Andrews met her & fell in love. She must have been a beautiful girl, for she was distinctly handsome even in age. A large calm woman, with brown eyes & hair, a rather dark complexion, regular & good features, & a good carriage.



A most lovable woman, of a sweet & placid temper which never was ruffled, and with a large heart, & good common sense, 'Aunt Ann' was admired & beloved by all, and by none more than by her numerous nephews & nieces, to whom she endeared herself by her warm & loving sympathy & her indulgent kindness. So many of us 'Grandmother Mather' and 'Aunt Ann' remain ~~at home~~ <sup>anyone</sup> of our most beautiful memories.

Her husband to whom she was tenderly attached died in 1884, & she survived him some years. In her last years she suffered from partial paralysis & nervous trouble which led to her entire seclusion, & clouded her mind with most painful mental depression.

Of the children several died in infancy. 3 sons & 3 daughters lived to take a part in life.



Robert the eldest son still carries on the business in Brock's Buildings, no unworthy successor of his father. He married Annie daughter of Capt. Wm Fisher & has a family of 3 sons & daughters.

Thomas Bourne, 2<sup>d</sup> Son, was for long in partnerships with his brother, but retired lately from the business. He married Eliz<sup>th</sup> Gray & has no family.

Joseph Benson, the 3<sup>d</sup> son surviving, after various employments married a widow (by whom he has one son) & settled down as a State School teacher until nervous trouble compelled his retirement.

The eldest daughter Annie Benson married Wm & Shoobridge, Farmer of Bushy Park by whom she has a large family of sons & daughters. She is a woman of a fine selfreliant character, in whom may be traced and in her



Fam. Memoirs (69) Mathers

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many of the best traits of both her parents - a large heart and a strong commonsense, with a fine tact. Vincent one of her sons married Mary Garrett - Edith the eldest daughter, a most amiable girl with fine qualities of heart & mind married Rev. Lelcan, a Wesleyan parson. Annies family seem to possess good capacities. <sup>see continued</sup>

Sarah the second daughter, a gentle girl but of firm & stirring character, became engaged to Edw<sup>d</sup> O. Cotton of Melvdon, but died at a comparatively early age, greatly lamented.

Jamie the youngest married her cousin Theophilus Henry Pollard. They have no family.

Of the other sons of Robert Mathers the 3<sup>d</sup> son John, a little quiet reserved man, who suffered from lameness,



Fam. Memls (70) Matthee

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was the least noticeable of the family. He was for many years assistant to his brother Joseph in the tailoring business, to which he had served an apprenticeship.

He married Isabella Biggs, daughter of Abraham Biggs, Carpenter & Builder, ~~a woman~~ a pretty woman but doomed to die of consumption. Her husband did not long survive her, having caught the fatal disease from his wife. They had several children, weak in body & mind, who all died at a comparatively early age. Some of them however leaving frail & delicate children

Samuel Benson, the youngest son, the only one born in Tasmania remained a staunch Wesleyan to the end of his days & took an active part in the religious work of the sect especially in Sunday School teaching.



Jam. Mearns (71) Mather

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He married Zephena Barnett  
(of a Huon family) & had a numerous  
family of sons & one daughter  
who lived to maturity.

He was for long an assistant in  
the Shop of his brother Robt Andrew  
& in his later years carried on the  
business of bookseller & stationer,  
chiefly of religious books.

He may be said to have been  
altogether Mather of the emotional  
type. His wife died early.

His eldest son William Benson  
became a Wesleyan parson. The  
rest sought their fortunes in Queensland  
to other colonies, and I believe  
have been more prolific than any  
other branch of the Mather family  
(except perhaps the Shoobridge <sup>offshoot</sup> family).

They represent the more material type.  
The only daughter, Lil, married Josiah  
Heyward who died young leaving a  
son Frank & two daughters. Mrs Heyward



Sam. Mearns (72) Mather

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<sup>merits</sup>  
~~deserves~~ special mention for her  
good qualities & her loving devotion  
to her father during the long & trying  
illness (Creeping paralysis) which  
ended in his death. She has reason  
to be satisfied with her children  
who show the result of her good  
wise training.

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After this very long  
digression (of some 50 pages)  
concerning our relatives on  
the Maternal side, it is  
time to return to the Walker  
family, and to continue its  
story, ~~from my father's settlement~~  
~~in Tasmania~~ beginning with  
the circumstances that led to my  
father finally making his home  
in Tasmania.